

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA**

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Jason Harris, individually and on behalf of all others
similarly situated

Plaintiff,

C.A. No.:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

-against-

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Affiliate Asset Solutions, LLC, Pendrick Capital Partners,
LLC
and John Does 1-25

Defendant(s).

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Plaintiff Jason Harris (hereinafter, "Plaintiff"), a North Carolina resident, brings this Class Action Complaint by and through his attorneys, against Defendant Affiliate Asset Solutions, LLC (hereinafter "Defendant AAS") and Defendant Pendrick Capital Partners, LLC (hereinafter "Defendant Pendrick"), individually and on behalf of a class of all others similarly situated, pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, based upon information and belief of Plaintiff's counsel, except for allegations specifically pertaining to Plaintiff, which are based upon Plaintiff's personal knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

1. Congress enacted the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (the "FDCPA" or the "Act") in 1977 in response to the "abundant evidence of the use of abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection practices by many debt collectors." 15 U.S.C. §1692(a). At that time, Congress was concerned that "abusive debt collection practices contribute to the number of

personal bankruptcies, to material instability, to the loss of jobs, and to invasions of individual privacy." *Id.* Congress concluded that "existing laws...[we]re inadequate to protect consumers," and that "'the effective collection of debts" does not require "misrepresentation or other abusive debt collection practices." 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692(b) & (c).

2. Congress explained that the purpose of the Act was not only to eliminate abusive debt collection practices, but also to "insure that those debt collectors who refrain from using abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged." *Id.* § 1692(e). After determining that the existing consumer protection laws were inadequate. *Id.* § 1692(b), Congress gave consumers a private cause of action against debt collectors who fail to comply with the Act. *Id.* § 1692k.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. The Court has jurisdiction over this class action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et. seq. The Court has pendent jurisdiction over any state law claims in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).

4. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) as this is where a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred.

NATURE OF THE ACTION

5. Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of a class of North Carolina consumers under § 1692 et seq. of Title 15 of the United States Code, commonly referred to as the Fair Debt Collections Practices Act ("FDCPA"), and

6. Plaintiff is seeking damages and declaratory relief.

PARTIES

7. Plaintiff is a resident of the State of North Carolina, County of Mecklenburg, residing at 7000 Indian Ridge Lane, Charlotte, NC 28214.

8. Defendant AAS is a "debt collector" as the phrase is defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692(a)(6) and used in the FDCPA with an address at 145 Technology Parkway NW, Suite 100, Peachtree Corners, GA 30092-2913.

9. Upon information and belief, Defendant AAS is a company that uses the mail, telephone, and facsimile and regularly engages in business the principal purpose of which is to attempt to collect debts alleged to be due another.

10. Defendant Pendrick is a "debt collector" as the phrase is defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692(a)(6) and used in the FDCPA with an address at 2331 Mill Road, Suite 103A, Alexandria, VA 22314 and can be served through its registered agent, CT Corporation at 150 Fayetteville St # 1011, Raleigh, NC 27601.

11. Upon information and belief, Defendant Pendrick is a company that uses the mail, telephone, and facsimile and regularly engages in business the principal purpose of which is to attempt to collect debts alleged to be due another.

12. John Does 1-25, are fictitious names of individuals and businesses alleged for the purpose of substituting names of Defendants whose identities will be disclosed in discovery and should be made parties to this action.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

13. Plaintiff brings this claim on behalf of the following class, pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a) and 23(b)(3).

14. The Class consists of:

- a. all individuals with addresses in the State of North Carolina;
- b. to whom Defendant AAS sent an initial collection letter attempting to collect a consumer debt;
- c. on behalf of Defendant Pendrick;
- d. that states that the time period provided for a settlement offer is sufficient time for a dispute to be investigated and verification to be provided;
- e. which letter was sent on or after a date one (1) year prior to the filing of this action and on or before a date twenty-one (21) days after the filing of this action.

15. The identities of all class members are readily ascertainable from the records of Defendants and those companies and entities on whose behalf they attempt to collect and/or have purchased debts.

16. Excluded from the Plaintiff Class are the Defendants and all officer, members, partners, managers, directors and employees of the Defendants and their respective immediate families, and legal counsel for all parties to this action, and all members of their immediate families.

17. There are questions of law and fact common to the Plaintiff Class, which are common issues that predominate over any issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue is whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms attached as Exhibits A, violate 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e.

18. The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the class members, as all are based upon the same facts and legal theories. The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Plaintiff Class defined in this Complaint. The Plaintiff has retained counsel with experience in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions, and neither the Plaintiff

nor his attorneys have any interests, which might cause them to not vigorously pursue this action.

19. This action has been brought, and may properly be maintained, as a class action pursuant to the provisions of Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because there is a well-defined community interest in the litigation:

- a. **Numerosity:** The Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that the Plaintiff Class defined above is so numerous that joinder of all members would be impractical.
- b. **Common Questions Predominate:** Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Plaintiff Class and those questions predominate over any questions or issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue is whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms attached as Exhibit A violate 15 § 1692e.
- c. **Typicality:** The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the class members. The Plaintiff and all members of the Plaintiff Class have claims arising out of the Defendants' common uniform course of conduct complained of herein.
- d. **Adequacy:** The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class members insofar as Plaintiff has no interests that are adverse to the absent class members. The Plaintiff is committed to vigorously litigating this matter. Plaintiff has also retained counsel experienced in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions. Neither the Plaintiff nor his counsel

have any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue the instant class action lawsuit.

- e. **Superiority:** A class action is superior to the other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy because the individual joinder of all members would be impracticable. Class action treatment will permit a large number of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum efficiently and without unnecessary duplication of effort and expense that individual actions would engender.

20. Certification of a class under Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is also appropriate in that the questions of law and fact common to members of the Plaintiff Class predominate over any questions affecting an individual member. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

21. Depending on the outcome of further investigation and discovery, Plaintiff may, at the time of class certification motion, seek to certify a class(es) only as to particular issues pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(4).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

22. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in the foregoing paragraphs with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.

23. Some time prior to March 5, 2020, an obligation was allegedly incurred to EMP of Mecklenburg PLLC.

24. The EMP of Mecklenburg PLLC obligation arose out of a transaction involving a debt incurred by Plaintiff which Plaintiff incurred primarily for personal, family or household purposes.

25. The alleged EMP of Mecklenburg PLLC obligation is a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

26. EMP of Mecklenburg PLLC are "creditor(s)" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(4).

27. On a date better known to Defendants, EMP of Mecklenburg PLLC purportedly sold the debt to Defendant Pendrick, who contracted with Defendant AAS to collect the alleged debt.

28. Defendants collect and attempt to collect debts incurred or alleged to have been incurred for personal, family or household purposes on behalf of creditors using the United States Postal Services, telephone and internet.

Violation – March 5, 2020 Collection Letter

29. On or about March 5, 2020, Defendant MRS sent Plaintiff an initial collection letter (the "Letter") regarding the alleged debt owed to EMP of Mecklenburg PLLC. The Letter is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

30. The letter states a total balance of \$1,188.00 and makes a settlement offer of \$594.00 valid until 4/20/2020.

31. The letter further states: "This offer does not diminish nor reduce your rights to dispute this matter in accordance with Federal Law. This offer period provides sufficient time for a dispute to be investigated and verification to be provided prior to the expiration of the offer period."

32. Defendants have no basis for the statement that the offer period provided is sufficient for a dispute to be investigated and verified.

33. Defendants do not know the nature of every possible dispute and there certainly can be circumstances that the offer period would not be sufficient to properly investigate and verify the dispute.

34. Defendants made a deceptive and misleading statement to Plaintiff in their letter by unequivocally stating that the offer period will be sufficient to investigate and verify the dispute.

35. Plaintiff was exposed to a risk of harm that she would rely on Defendant's statement to her detriment and thereby lose the settlement offer.

36. Defendants' letter does not state that the settlement offer will be held open while a dispute is being investigated and verified and therefore leaves open the possibility that the settlement offer will pass while the dispute is being investigated.

37. Defendant's collection efforts with respect to this alleged debt from Plaintiff caused Plaintiff to suffer concrete and particularized harm because the FDCPA provides Plaintiff with the legally protected right to be not to be misled or treated unfairly with respect to any action for the collection of any consumer debt.

38. Defendant's deceptive, misleading and unfair representations with respect to its collection effort were material misrepresentations that affected and frustrated Plaintiff's ability to intelligently respond to Defendant's collection efforts because Plaintiff could not adequately respond to the Defendant's demand for payment of this debt.

39. As a result of Defendants' deceptive misleading and false debt collection practices, Plaintiff has been damaged.

COUNT I
VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692e
et seq.

40. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in the foregoing paragraphs with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.

41. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

42. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692e, a debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.

43. Defendant violated said section by:

a. Making a false and misleading representation in violation of §1692e(10).

44. Due to the fact that Defendants' conduct violated Section 1692e et seq. of the FDCPA, Defendant is liable to Plaintiff for actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

45. Pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby requests a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Jason Harris, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, demands judgment from Defendant AAS and Defendant Pendrick as follows:

1. Declaring that this action is properly maintainable as a Class Action and certifying Plaintiff as Class representative, and Randolph Emory, Esq. as Class Counsel;
2. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class statutory damages;

3. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class actual damages;
4. Awarding Plaintiff costs of this Action, including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses;
5. Awarding pre-judgment interest and post-judgment interest; and
6. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: February 25, 2021

/s/ Randolph Emory
C. Randolph Emory
The Emory Law Firm, P.C.
11020 David Taylor Drive, Ste 102
Charlotte, NC 28262

/s/ Raphael Deutsch
Stein Saks, PLLC
By: Raphael Deutsch
285 Passaic Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601
Phone: (201) 282-6500 ext. 101
Fax: (201)-282-6501
rdeutsch@steinsakslegal.com
PRO HAC VICE PENDING

Attorneys for Plaintiff